

From the DCC Youth Desk of the Lutheran World Federation

DECEMBER 1990



World Summit for Children

(United Nations Symbol)

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UNICEF Round Table of NGOs
Several contributions to
the World Summit on Children
Various other reports

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P R E F A C E

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This is the final edition of the Youth Letter for the year 1990 and also from the Department of Church Cooperation. Next year's issues will come from the Department for Mission and Development.

This issue is dedicated to children and all those persons involved in trying to create better living conditions for them. It is well-known that over 40,000 children die everyday and more than 35 million are born on the streets and grow up there. These staggering figures seem to have no significant impact on the conscience of decision makers.

In the autumn of 1990 the international community held a world Summit for Children in New York. Every single head of government declared a re-dedication to working towards a radically better world for children during the coming decade. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) through its General Secretary, Dr. Gunnar Staalsett along with other non-governmental organizations called upon the world - governments, communities and people of good will, to turn the noble promises of the past into concrete programs that will radically change the poor conditions within which children live. As nobody can be fed on promises, children too can not be fed on promises. They urgently need the political and spiritual will of those who have the authority to decide.

The LWF statement to the Summit, included in this Youth Letter, lists those governments which have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Your home church and your youth group need to check whether your government is among them. If so, does appropriate legislation exist in your country? If you do not have a copy of the Convention let us know and we can send you one. As we approach the celebration of the birth of the child Jesus, there is no better time for you and your church to make this important investigation.

Our faith in Christ demands that we see the "little ones" as an integral part of that new community which our Lord brought into being through his death on the cross. Jesus was crucified for those children who are facing abuse, neglect and untold suffering while the decision makers opt to spend the world's available resources on instruments of conflict - weapons.

Ishmael Noko
Director

NOTES FROM OUR DESK

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What has happened since you received your last issue?

1. The Coordinator of the Youth and Students Program, Julius Filo, left the services of the LWF Youth Desk in July 1990. He has now returned to his home country, Czechoslovakia, to take up his former posts as pastor of his congregation and lecturer at the Theological Faculty in Bratislava.
2. The LWF Officers, during the Executive Committee/Council meeting in June 1990, appointed Ms. Siv Limstrand from Norway to the post of Secretary for Youth in Church and Society (new title). Siv will start her work at the Youth Desk in January 1991.
3. The Executive Committee/Council, at its June meeting, approved the following activities for 1991:
 - An Evaluation Meeting with members of the previous Ad hoc Youth Committee and those representing youth in the LWF governing bodies in the previous period. This activity had been approved for 1990, but has been postponed until 1991 so that the new Secretary for Youth in Church and Society will be able to attend;
 - An Asian Youth Consultation in May-June, 1991 as a three day meeting prior to the Asian Mission Conference in Manila, the Philippines;
 - A Caribbean Youth Consultation, in conjunction with the Congress of the Caribbean Lutheran churches, in November 1991;
 - A Latin American Youth Consultation in Chile, upon the invitation of the LWF member church;
 - An East African Subregional Youth Conference planned for June 1991, in Madagascar, by the East African Lutheran Youth Coordinating Committee, which was established as a direct result of the African Youth Leaders Conference in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, May 1988;
 - Study/Visitation Team to Nepal. "Youth attracted to eastern religions - a challenge to our churches and a chance to improve our youth ministry" is the focus of this visit/study program;
 - Youth Internship programs in the LWF headquarters, World Service Field Offices and an exchange program between two churches;
 - Stewards at the Council meeting - an international team of stewards, representing selected member churches in the geographical region where the Council meets, will attend a two day introduction prior to the Council meeting and serve at the Council meeting, together with local stewards;
4. The budget for participation of youth in ecumenical activities, for the Youth Letter and other publications was also approved.

5. Since the new Secretary for Youth in Church and Society will take up her post here only in January 1991, some of the above activities may be postponed until a later date.
6. Youth Internships for 1991 were announced in the last issue of the Youth Letter, but so far only one application has been received:
 - a. One intern for a 12 months period to work at the Youth Desk. The main responsibility will be to finalize the Lutheran Youth Directory containing information on the youth ministry of our member churches;
 - b. Two 6 month internships with other LWF units, yet to be identified.

Applications have to be endorsed by the leadership of the respective home church - member of the LWF.

WE CAN SEND YOU THE FOLLOWING FREE OF CHARGE:

1. Report of the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering, Budapest 1984 - in English and German
2. "The Future is Now" an LWF contribution to the International Youth Year 1985 - in English
3. "Young People on Peace and Justice" another contribution to the International Youth Year - in English
4. "Lutheran Youth Confessing Christ in Asia" - report of the regional Asian youth gathering in Jerusalem, August 1987 - in English
5. "Wege die zum Frieden Führen" - Bericht über der Europäischen Lutherischen Jugendkonferenz in der CSFR, September/Okttober 1988 - in Deutsch
6. Luther League Program Planning Guides (1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88) - in English
7. Copies of Youth Letter No. 28
8. Report on the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, January 19-27, 1991 - in English, German and Spanish
9. "Renewing Worship" a summarizing study based on activities 1985-90

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE YOUTH LETTER

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After the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference in Argentina, January 1990, some participants indicated their willingness to contribute to the costs of the Youth Letter. We appreciate this very much. In fact, we would appreciate contributions from all of you who are able to pay so that we

can send more copies free of charge to those who cannot. In fact, some of you have already contributed and we thank you very much for it.

The following bank accounts can be used for contributions to the costs of the Youth Letter (e.g. US\$ 10 per year or whatever you feel that you can pay):

SWISS FRANCS

Banque Scandinave en Suisse
Cours de Rive 11, Case Postale 901
CH-1211 Geneva 3, Switzerland
account: 620033.001.0.11

DEUTSCH MARKS

Schroeder Muenschmeyer Hengst
& Co.
Friedensstrasse 6-10
D-6000 Frankfurt 1, FRG
account: 00-843 037-00

DOLLARS

Chase Manhattan Bank
825 UN Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017, USA
account: 949-2-417390

SWEDISH CROWNS

Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken
S-106 40 Stockholm, Sweden
account: 99 5277-10 002 61

When making a payment to one of the above accounts it is important to indicate the following on the payment:

"TO YOUTH & STUDENTS ACCOUNT (30)310.902"

Furthermore we would appreciate your informing us about your contribution by separate letter since the bank does not give us the contributors' names.

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PEN PALS:

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A 17 year old boy from Ethiopia would like to have pen pals. His name and address is as follows:

Mesfin Lemma
c/o Lemma Yiheyis
General post office
P.O. Box 1112
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

R E P O R T

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A meeting of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), was held September 5-16, 1990, in Chantilly, France. It was preceded by a three-day gathering for women, September 2-4, 1990

The approximately 230 persons who participated were both cosmopolitan and polyglot. The theme, "student witness in pluralist societies", was considered by reading the Bible, listening to philosophical lectures about pluralism, analyzing the international political situation and by participating in daily services.

The WSCF considered the role and mission it must assume in the forthcoming years. It also reported on previous actions and activities. Some of the former leaders related their experiences and achievements. The current leaders proposed new directions for dealing with the conflicts and problems existing in the world today. Everyone was invited to share opinions and suggest plans for mission and action.

In the elections which closed the meeting the Co-Secretaries General and Officers were elected. Amendments to improve some aspect of the constitution were approved, and the Assembly also approved motions concerning immigration, ecumenism as well as many other issues.

The mission of the WSCF is to assert our faith through achievements which are in accordance with the world and its new developments. Much has already been done by listening to the cries and silences of wounded peoples. The federation is not content only to listen, it also wants to act. At the meeting were people who dare to assume risks to affirm and defend love.

The atmosphere at the meeting was very friendly and cheerful, especially because of the music and songs from various countries and continents.

Isabelle Hummel
(LWF representative at the WSCF meeting)



Jorunn Sandvik, Norway

R E P O R T

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**from World Federation of Democratic Youth
on the International Youth Action for the Defense of the Amazonian Region**

Every minute 20 hectares of the Amazonian rainforest are lost. In the last 30 years, deforestation affected more than 400,000 square kilometers of Amazonian rainforest. Young people raise their voice against this process.

From July 18 - 22, 1990, 28 organizations from 14 countries and 71 Brazilian organizations met in Manaus, in the heart of the Amazonian region. The following is an excerpt from the summary report on the **International Youth Action for the Defense of the Amazonian Region**:

The event was organized by the WORLD YOUTH RAINFOREST ACTION (WYRA), a network of eight international youth and student organizations, which are part of the International Youth Campaign "SAVE THE AMAZON".

The network started in October 1989 and its aim is to mobilize young people and students all over the world to strive for the preservation of the world's rainforest resources. The activity was hosted by the Municipality of Manaus and the University of Amazonas (FUA) and was supported by the Environment Liaison Center International (ELCI).

The opening ceremony took place July 18, in the Institute of High Studies of the Amazon (ISEA) with the participation of the Mayor of Manaus, Mr. Arthur Virgilio Netto, and several local personalities. Approximately 30 Indians from more than 20 nations of the Brazilian Amazon were also present.

The program reflected the main problems of the Amazonian Region. Items discussed were:

1. "The Occupation carried out in the Amazon"
2. "The Gold Mining and the use of Mercury in the Amazonian rivers"
3. "500 Years of Resistance by the Amazonian Peoples"
4. "The Amazonian Universities, Youth and the Ecological Questions"

On July 21, the participants were divided into three working groups which discussed proposals for the final document. In the Final Plenary, a final document the "YOUTH PLATFORM" was adopted. It was decided to initiate the AMAZONIAN YOUTH COOPERATION NETWORK to implement the Plan of Work, as adopted, and to ensure a follow-up of its decisions.

The Network is composed of all the organizations which participated in the meeting from the Amazonian countries and is open to all organizations which send an official request to one of the coordinating organizations. The coordinating organizations of the Amazonian Youth Cooperation Network will channel contacts amongst the network members.

After the Final Plenary, a great open-air concert was organized in a main square of Manaus with participation by local artists and honored by the presence of Paulinho da Viola, a famous national artist.

On July 22 all international delegations participated in an excursion to the Amazonian rivers.

Mauro Porto
World Federation of Democratic Youth - WFDY
POB 147
H-1389 Budapest
Hungary

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REACTION TO THE YOUTH LETTER FROM A READER:

"Love, joy and peace be yours through our Lord Jesus Christ!
I have read the Youth Letter 28 issue and I was so blessed with it, especially your article 'Live in Hope' and other Lutheran youth activities around the world, and also of course the PAYC reports."

Michael Carino
President of a youth organization
in the Lutheran Church in the
Philippines

P.S. We at the Youth Desk are always happy to hear about your opinion of the Youth Letter. We also appreciate any kind of comments on the content, length or layout, as well as suggestions for improvement.

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SOVIETS DEMAND THE RIGHT TO REFUSE MILITARY SERVICE (lwi)

Moscow, Sept. 6 -- Soviet citizens are becoming more insistent in their demand for the right to refuse military service, and for an alternative community service. Recently a teacher from the Rowensk College of Education had a letter published in the weekly newspaper "Ogonyok," expressing the view that a law on the refusal of military service for pacifist or religious motives -- as well as the right to an alternative form of service -- should be passed as soon as possible. The number of those refusing military service for reasons of conscience reportedly has risen in the Soviet Union.

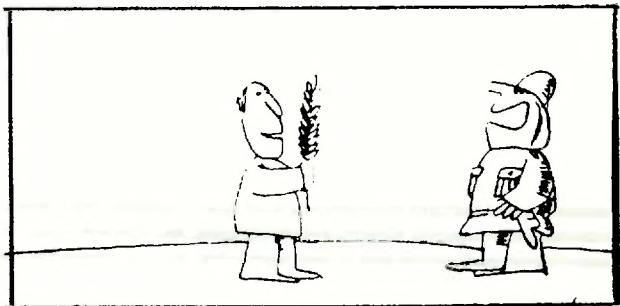
Conscientious objectors mainly belong to the religious groups of the Pentecostals, Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. "But there is also another group of young people -- those who take up arms only because they are afraid of criminal prosecution," wrote the educationalist. The only choice is military service or prison. Remedial action should be taken as soon as possible in the form of a law on the refusal of military service, the teacher argued. He pointed out that in Vienna in 1989 the Soviet Union committed itself to guaranteeing the right of freedom of conscience under its own laws.

The refusal of military service was excluded from the Soviet Union's planned legislation on freedom of conscience and religion. This was to be formulated in a law of its own. So far, however, there has been no indication of when this will be. The Soviet Minister of Defense, Dmitri Jazov, said in an

interview with the army newspaper "Krasnaya Svezda" in June that army reform would require 9 to 10 years.

In August the Soviet media released a statement from the Moscow City Soviet on alternative military service. The statement said: "The Union law on universal military service does not take into account the socio-political changes that are taking place in the country. In some of its passages, the Union law does not correspond to the general declaration on human rights." In the statement, which was also addressed to the Ministry of Defense, the presidium of the Moscow Soviet is asked to change the recruiting process soon. Alternative service should be permitted for religious, pacifist and health motives, the statement said.

In a recent report on the question of conscientious objectors, the youth newspaper "Moskovski Komsomolez" was skeptical. "Will two things as incompatible as the Soviet army and human rights be able to agree?" the paper asked.



CHILDREN FIRST

Round Table of 17 NGOs
sponsored by UNICEF, Geneva, 15-18 September 1990,

in view of the SUMMIT MEETING of Heads of State
in New York, 29 September 1990

About 200 young people from 110 countries spent three days discussing the needs and problems for the future of humanity with special reference to children, their education, health and well-being. They also discussed possible action to solve the global problems of the environment, poverty, the external debt, etc. etc.

Housed in Geneva air raid shelters, with 8 showers for the group of 200, meeting and eating in an old factory, run by local youth groups, these young people of all races, languages and religions were full of life and enthusiasm to prepare plans of action in their countries on their return home, and recommendations and declarations to be given to their respective Head of State at the New York Conference.

This was done in several large groups, based on the main topics. Interpretation was provided for the plenary sessions. Frequently they subdivided into smaller language groups (English, Spanish and French) which allowed a more direct exchange of views on the Rights of the Child and ways of structural adjustments to be undertaken by governments to solve the serious global problems affecting the health and well-being of children in all parts of the world.

The Closing Session, held in the very hall of the United Nations, where the Human Rights Commission had adopted the Convention on the RIGHTS OF THE CHILD earlier this year, remained in the hands of the young participants. They invited the high ranking UN Officials (including the representative of the Secretary-General and Director of the UN Geneva, the two directors of UNICEF of Geneva and New York) to join in. This they did with good humor, obviously a refreshing experience for them in their usual serious and formal existence.

A box was prepared by each participant for their respective Head of State, containing symbolic objects representing the needs and rights of the child, together with a letter and the Declaration.

Geneva, 18.9.1990

Ruth Bonner
Representative of
Medical Women's International Association

The following is the letter from the Round Table of NGOs, who met in Geneva on September 15-18, 1990, to their respective Head of State at the New York Summit:

Your Excellency,

This is a gift for you, please open it.

The child is more than words on paper, legal documents and files.

The child is more than a Declaration or a Convention.

At last the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes a child as a person with civil, economic, social and cultural rights.

We call on you to remove the gag from the child's mouth, this will be only a symbolic gesture but it is the first step in making their rights practical realities.

The child is confronted by external forces which form its environment, whether they be natural such as deforestation, toxic waste or pollution, or social which can include for example, poverty, child abuse and the plight of refugees.

The seeds represent growth not only of the plants and trees but also of the human being, which in today's societies is often being ignored.

We believe the child will only learn to respect the environment and take responsibility for its preservation by being appropriately educated.

Every breath you take, a child dies either of under-nutrition or easily preventable diseases.

It is so simple to save a child's life. All we need is proper health education, access to health facilities and community health programs.

The package you hold in your hand contains just one potential solution which can save the life of a child.

You are able to read this letter, but millions of children cannot. Peace, security and the future of your country and of the world depends on the physical, emotional, mental, cultural, spiritual and social development of all people, especially children.

We gave you this piece of chalk for free. Now use it to redraw your educational priorities to make education free, open relevant and accessible to all children, wherever they may live, and ensure that equal opportunities prevail.

The face of a child that you see on the banknote represents an adjustment policy, with a human face. The poorest and the most vulnerable children have paid, are paying and will continue to pay their country's debt, specifically in the Third World, with the sacrifice of their growth and development, their health and opportunities to be educated.

To improve the standards of living of children a new international economic order and a cancellation of the external debt of the third world countries is vital.

Your Excellency, we wish to take this unique opportunity to share our collective commitment for children, with all Heads of State or Government, whether or not you are present at the Summit, to show you that children and young people do care and are acting to give children a future. What about you?

Our common concerns and challenges are represented in this box, please, keep them close by and remember "Children First"!

Sincerely yours,

200 young people from
110 countries and networks of
20 international youth organizations with
275 million young members



LWF SPONSORS STATEMENT TO WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN
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The Lutheran World Federation co-sponsored a statement on children's rights and welfare that was addressed to the United Nations World Summit for Children, September 29-30, 1990 in New York, USA. The statement, endorsed by 30 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) based in Europe, called on states represented at the summit to give priority to the needs of children.

The NGOs -- all concerned with humanitarian or development work -- commit themselves to helping implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and to "promoting those ethical and humanitarian values which enhance the dignity of children and protect them in their vulnerability. Other signatories to the statement include the Aga Khan Foundation, Caritas Internationalis, the International Council of Women, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Salvation Army, World Vision International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

The text of the statement, co-sponsored by the LWF, is as follows:

**STATEMENT ON THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN BY
HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The following statement is addressed to the heads of state or government by international and national humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations, representing hundreds of millions of active volunteers and professionals in all parts of the globe.

"We welcome your initiative to address one of the burning issues of our times, namely the survival, protection and development of children, who constitute nearly half of the world's population.

Children suffer and are the victims of exploitation in all countries of the world. We therefore applaud the unanimous adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the United Nations and recognize the fundamental importance of the principles in it and in other international legal instruments protecting children.

We call on you and all other heads of state or government to reaffirm your personal and official commitment to children by:

Identifying and publicly recognizing the real needs of children at all stages of their development and initiating appropriate plans and concrete actions to meet these needs;

Giving the highest priority to children when establishing socio-economic development plans, with the aim of ensuring that children do not pay the price of structural adjustment;

Taking appropriate steps to address the debt issue, which has especially negative repercussions on children, by ensuring the support for specific actions including debt relief to benefit children;

Ratifying and implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Focusing on action for the following priority issues:

- a) equality of treatment for all children without discrimination of any kind;
- b) programs in primary health care, food and nutrition, safe water and sanitation, family planning, child survival, and health education, including AIDS prevention;
- c) literacy campaigns and access to education for all, through formal and non-formal provision;
- d) environmental protection and sustainable development;
- e) integral human development of the child, including psychological, cultural, intercultural, and spiritual development;
- f) children in especially difficult circumstances including:
 - children deprived of family care,
 - abandoned and street children,
 - disabled children,
 - physically, mentally or sexually abused children,
 - child victims of commercial exploitation,
 - exploited working children,
 - children in armed conflicts,
 - refugee, migrant, and internally displaced children,
 - children in extreme poverty,
 - children deprived of liberty;

Strengthening the role of the family and its capacity to care for children, developing family life education, and promoting and supporting the goals of the forthcoming International Year of the Family (1994);

Recognizing the fundamental role played by women in the health and development of children and communities, and empowering them in order to facilitate their full participation at all levels;

Recognizing that children are often those most affected by armed conflict, agreeing to further urgent disarmament and peace-seeking efforts, and ensuring that children are the first to benefit from reductions in military expenditure;

Ensuring that national plans for children include the participation of non-governmental organizations and facilitate their work at all levels;

Committing increased resources, nationally and internationally, for the security, health, education and well-being of children, and restructuring international aid to ensure that the needs of children are given the highest priority.

Meeting the needs of children is a task which cannot and should not be left to governments alone. It requires the mobilization of all sectors of society, and NGOs are ready and able to play a vital role both nationally and internationally.

We pledge our increased assistance to, and protection of children by:

- i) Establishing and developing national, regional and global coalitions to actively promote the ratification, implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- ii) Strengthening and developing partnerships with governments, inter-governmental organizations, other non-governmental organizations and communities, in order to respond more effectively to the priority needs of children;
- iii) Disseminating information of common concern and undertaking collaborative research to help clarify the priority needs of children and identify appropriate solutions;
- iv) Mobilizing political will and resources to strengthen East/North/South/West networking in order to help achieve the international community's development goals for children in the 90s;
- v) Involving children at all stages of their development in identifying and responding to problems that affect their future;
- vi) Promoting those ethical and humanitarian values which enhance the dignity of children and protect them in their vulnerability.

We have great hopes for this World Summit for Children, the first in history, and count on its success. We look forward to working with you in a creative and determined way on specific action programs for children." (lwi)

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SEPTEMBER 23 • 1990
Candlelight Vigils
in observance of



In order to bring worldwide public attention to the World Summit for Children, Candlelight Vigils were organized around sunset on September 23, 1990 in many countries around the globe. About 260 vigils were scheduled in 28 countries, including Australia, Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, Peru, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

LWF APPEALS FOR FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AT WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN

New York, Oct. 4 (lwi) - The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has appealed to the world's governments urging them to take concrete and immediate steps to secure through legal and economic means the fundamental human rights of children. At the World Summit for Children here Sept. 30, LWF General Secretary Gunnar Staalsett also appealed to the churches to mobilize their resources on behalf of the worldwide campaign "to support the most vulnerable, beautiful and precious gifts to humanity, our children."

The World Summit for Children presents a special challenge to the LWF, Staalsett said. Behind the words of the LWF's Eighth Assembly theme "I have Heard the Cry of My People," (Curitiba, Brazil, earlier this year), he said, is the real and agonizing cry of the 30 million street children of Latin America. It joins with the cry of millions of children unnecessarily dying of malnutrition and disease in every part of the world including Eastern Europe.

The cry of the children, including so many in the affluent societies who are increasingly neglected by their parents, mistreated and even sexually exploited, is not yet heard by the churches, Staalsett said. The main text of Staalsett's message to the World Summit for Children follows:

"During the days of the Summit a great deal will be said about children and the staggering burden of suffering which children are forced to bear. We will be hearing from experts at UNICEF and other organizations, from people who are committed to that day when this intolerable burden of suffering will be lifted. We will also be hearing a large number of statistics, some which simply defy belief, for example, that 40,000 children die each day from diseases for which we already possess relatively inexpensive vaccines. Equally tragic are the millions of children who survive early death from disease, those for whom life offers little more than survival, who are neglected, rejected and even brutalized by the very institutions of society whose responsibility it is to protect them.

Still it is relatively easy to cite the statistics--unless of course they happen to represent your own children. If you have ever visited places in the world where children are dying--I mean dying in front of you, before your eyes--you discover something very troubling. You know that what you are witnessing is an affront to human dignity and a denial of the most basic human rights. You suddenly feel deep in your hear the utter contradiction between the hard realities and the noble promises we have all too easily made.

At the World Food Conference held in 1974 in Rome, the leader of one delegation made this statement:

'Today we must proclaim a bold objective--that within a decade no child will go to bed hungry, no family will fear for the next day's bread, and that no human being's future and capacities will be stunted by malnutrition.'

All of us know very well that we possess the resources to prevent much of the death and suffering of children. The question is whether we possess

the will. The cost of saving these young lives is US\$ 2.5 billion annually, the very amount which the world spends on military armaments every single day.

Let us resolve that we will not gather 10 or 15 years hence to contemplate the shattered promises made at this Summit or to stand at the graveside of millions of children who will have died because we failed to act. Rather, let us resolve this day to hear the cries of the children of the world and to speak and to act on their behalf.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has just come into force. It is one of the most important human rights instruments ever approved. The convention sets forth fundamental rights and freedoms for children, provides certain special protections from dangers to which children are particularly susceptible, and acknowledges rights that seek to promote a child's proper development. We urge universal adoption and universal compliance with the convention.

The Lutheran World Federation calls upon the governments of the world to:

- ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- do all possible to ensure its observance
- give children the "first call" on society's resources
- reallocate funds to meet the needs of children
- initiate and renew efforts to protect the lives of children through appropriate legislation and follow-up
- take seriously the declaration of the World Summit and implement its plan of action.

The World Summit for Children represents a special challenge to communities of faith. We are called to mobilize all human and spiritual resources to support governments as well as all men and women of good will in their efforts to attain its noble goals. Had there been such efforts, the twentieth century could have become the century of the child. It became instead a century of war, hunger and death. Let us resolve to do better as we move into the twenty-first.

We give thanks to God for the World Summit for Children and for the work of UNICEF. It is a sign of hope for our world. For the world leaders, who have the possibility of transforming this hope into reality, we pray for wisdom and courage, and for a vision of a future where children--and all humankind--will know a healthier, safer, and more human world."



Photo UNICEF

COMMENTS AFTER THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN

The summit is a great event in the history of the United Nations. It could prove to become a turning point for the social situation of children in particular in the third world. Above all it constitutes the unleashing of a global moral force, which needs immediate follow-up by governments, churches and other non-governmental organizations.

We will send the declaration and the program of action immediately to all member churches for study and follow-up. I will initiate a staff program to analyze the content of the summit and define its significance for LWF programs. A report will be presented to the LWF Council meeting in July 1991 for thorough discussion and appropriate actions.

In my view it is of great urgency that the churches marshall their moral, spiritual and other resources behind this historic call from the world leaders to get the child off the waiting list when national priorities are set. Churches in countries which have not yet ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child should initiate a process to have this important instrument for children's rights ratified and implemented by their Governments.

Gunnar Staalslett
General Secretary
Lutheran World Federation

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States Parties to the Convention by ratification or accession: 50

Bangladesh	03.08.1990 (r)
Belize	02.05.1990 (r)
Benin	03.08.1990 (r)
Bhutan	01.08.1990 (r)
Bolivia	26.06.1990 (r)
Brazil	24.09.1990 (r)
Burkina Faso	31.08.1990 (r)
Chile	13.08.1990 (r)
Costa Rica	21.08.1990 (r)
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	21.09.1990 (r)
Ecuador	23.03.1990 (r)
Egypt	06.07.1990 (r)
El Salvador	10.07.1990 (r)
France	07.08.1990 (r)
Gambia	08.08.1990 (r)
Ghana	05.02.1990 (r)
Guatemala	06.06.1990 (r)
Guinea	13.07.1990 (a)
Guinea Bissau	20.08.1990 (r)
Holy See	20.04.1990 (r)
Honduras	10.08.1990 (r)
Indonesia	05.09.1990 (r)

Kenya	30.07.1990	(r)	
Mali	20.09.1990	(r)	
Malta	30.09.1990	(r)	*
Mauritius	26.07.1990	(a)	
Mexico	21.09.1990	(r)	
Mongolia	05.07.1990	(r)	
Namibia	30.09.1990	(r)	*
Nepal	14.09.1990	(r)	
Nicaragua	30.09.1990	(r)	*
Niger	30.09.1990	(r)	*
Paraguay	25.09.1990	(r)	
Peru	04.09.1990	(r)	
Philippines	21.08.1990	(r)	
Portugal	21.09.1990	(r)	
Romania	28.09.1990	(r)	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	24.07.1990	(r)	
Senegal	31.07.1990	(r)	
Seychelles	07.09.1990	(a)	
Sierra Leone	18.06.1990	(r)	
Sudan	03.08.1990	(r)	
Sweden	29.06.1990	(r)	
Togo	01.08.1990	(r)	
Uganda	17.08.1990	(r)	
USSR	16.08.1990	(r)	
Venezuela	13.09.1990	(r)	
Viet Nam	01.03.1990	(r)	
Zaire	27.09.1990	(r)	
Zimbabwe	11.09.1990	(r)	

* marks newcomer since last up-date of 28.09.90

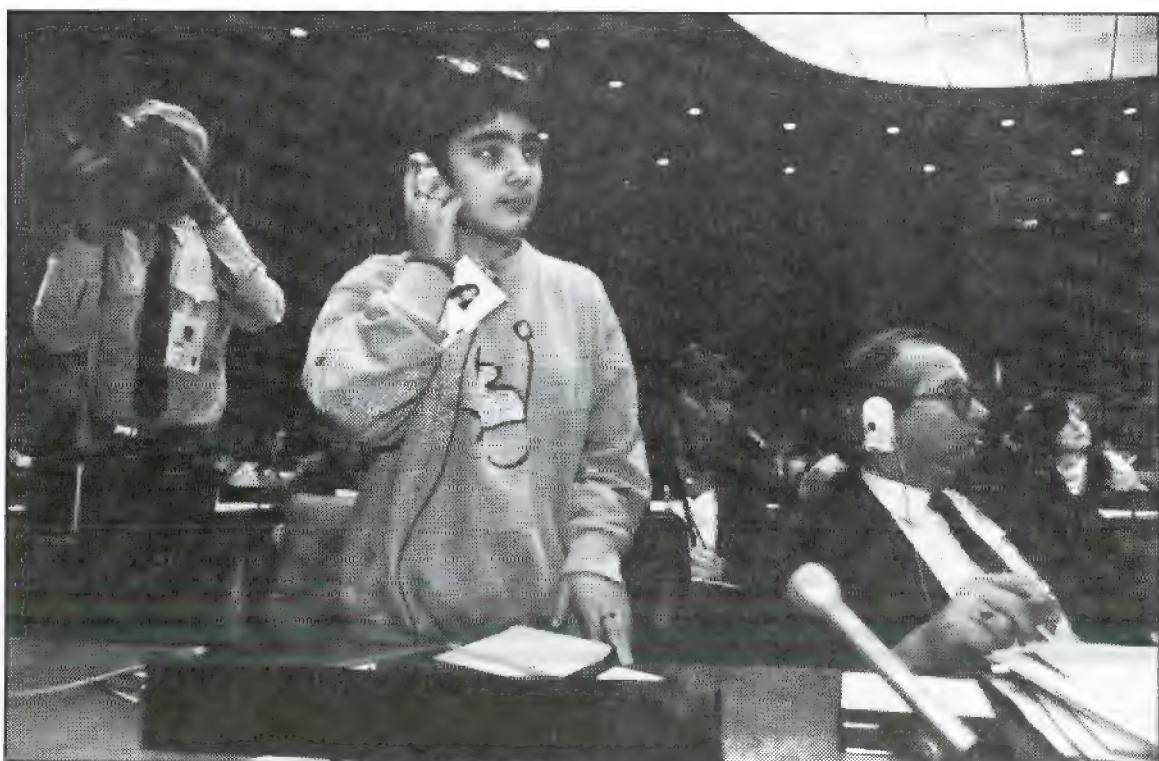


Photo: UNICEF/David Barbour

The LWF Youth Desk has been asked to publish the following:

CHILD'S FOUNDATION EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Objectives

The Child's Foundation Education Development Program (CFEDP) through the establishment of the Martin Luther Nursery School (MLNS), pursues the following objectives with the aim of contributing to the education of disadvantaged children in rural communities:

- To provide adequate care and supervision for children while their parents are at their respective jobs.
- To inculcate in children the spirit of inquiry and creativity through exploring nature and the local environment; by playing with toys; through artistic and musical activities, etc.
- To contribute to a preschool protection program in rural communities by providing health care/supervision and nutritional needs to children of preschool age.
- To provide a ministry to these very young children so that they will grow in the true Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Background

Inadequate nursery schools in rural communities in Nigeria aroused a growing awareness for the need to establish a Child Foundation Education Development Program. Action based on this awareness is never more urgently needed than at the present time. There is a great difference between the nursery schools operating in the cities and the ones in rural communities. The ones in the cities are equipped with well qualified teachers, instructional material/aid, inside and outside playing equipment, whereas their counterparts in rural areas have little or nothing for the children to enjoy.

The difference is because the Government or governmental agencies do not operate nursery schools and the few private investors do not like to invest in rural areas because of non-existent or low profit. Therefore it is necessary to support the CFEDP's efforts to improve the situation for children in rural communities. This will be carried out in cooperation with national and international organizations, governments, individuals and groups.

Activities

1. To cooperate with national and international institutions whose aims and objectives are in line with the CFEDP for the purpose of sharing ideas, information and assisting each other.
2. To study and research the production of teaching aids/instructional materials and indoor and outdoor play equipment, made from local materials.

3. To assist the Government in promoting a Nutrition Education Program in rural communities in Nigeria.
4. To visit other nursery schools within the rural areas and in cities so as to expose the children from rural areas to the facilities in the cities' nursery schools and exchange information.

Funding

The Child Foundation Education Development Program is funded with grants from both national and international foundations and organizations, donations from parishes and local congregations of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria and donations from individuals and enterprises.

For further information, please contact:

Coordinator
Martin Luther Nursery School
P.O. Box 3130
Garki - Abuja (FCT)
Nigeria

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Photo: UNICEF/David Barbour

ROOTS AND WINGS

National Canadian Lutheran Youth Gathering,
August 22-25, 1990 in Vancouver, Canada

Account of
a trip on wings to the roots of life,
by Matthias Franke
(translation: B. Voltenauer)



In the summer of last year a trip to Canada for a GDR citizen was as Utopian as a trip to the moon. The possibilities of traveling were very restricted and we did not have wings to fly with. In August 1989 an invitation was sent to our church and in January 1990 Katrin and I were asked to go. It took this length of time for our church to make sure that we could accept this invitation. After some initial difficulties with the authorities travel arrangements were made easier due to changes in some of the international agreements.

Then, on August 9, 1990 Katrin and I started our journey to Canada. A childhood dream came true. It was my first trip on wings.

First, we stayed for a week in Winnipeg where we had the possibility of getting to know the country, people and congregations. Everywhere we experienced a friendly and heartfelt welcome. In spite of some language barriers (we, as former GDR citizens, lacked experience with foreign countries) we soon felt at home.

In addition to many personal encounters, we were also able to gain experience with different congregations of the Canadian Church. In this connection I would like to mention one thing which struck me. Contrary to the congregations in Germany, the ones we visited in Canada were smaller but no less attended. These numerous small congregations make a closer and deeper relationship between the members possible. The relations between them seemed more cordial than in Germany and life in the congregation more binding. People knew each other and about each other. A charitable meal for needy Indian families and an outdoor communion worship service were especially impressive.

On August 18-22 we traveled by bus with the youth of Winnipeg and surrounding congregations through the south of Canada to Vancouver. This enabled us to discover the countryside, and also to get to know and talk to each other. During the trip we stayed overnight in different congregations which welcomed so many young people in a self-evident and uncomplicated way.

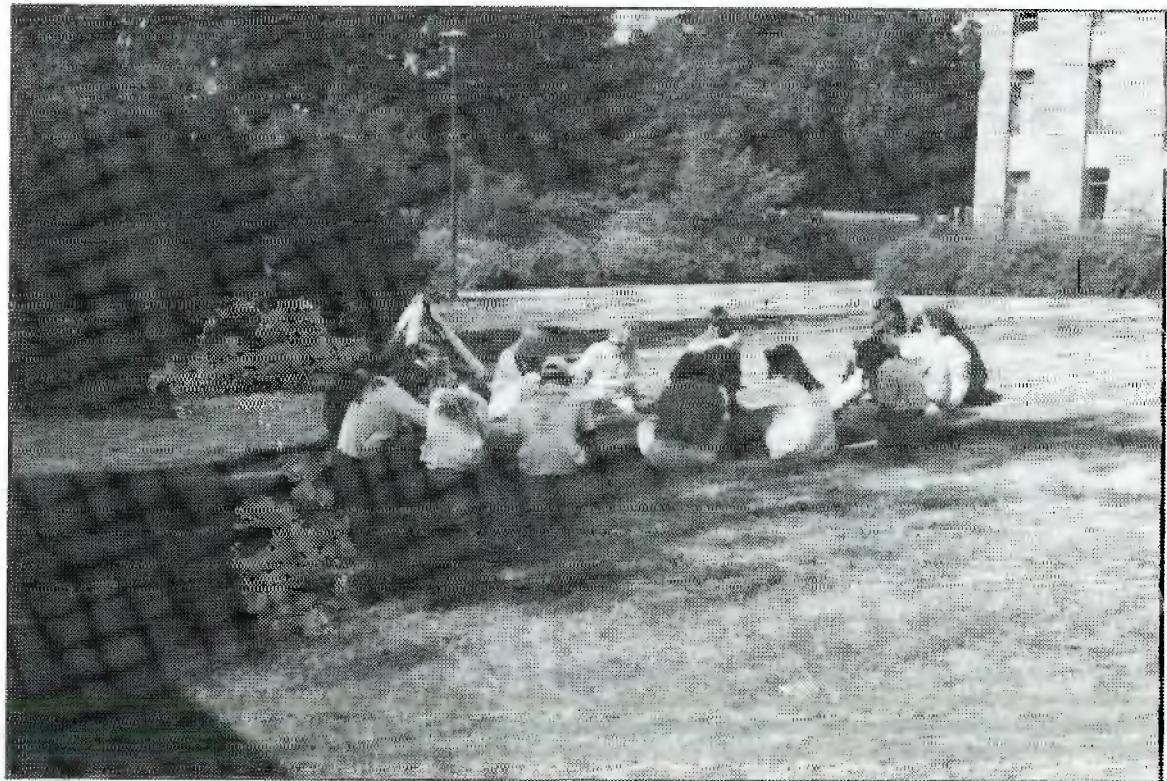
The meeting in Vancouver (August 22-25) was a very important experience for both of us. If, in the time before, we had often had the feeling of having wings, of enjoying the freedom of a country which knows how to handle freedom, during the youth gathering it was more a question of going to the roots of life. Very soon we could feel our common roots in our faith. From the first moment to the last we felt at home. Here are some rays of light which were especially important for me during those days:

In such a huge country with great distances and numerically small congregations the days spent together in such great numbers is very important for the young people. For a long time afterwards one can remember with pleasure such a communion and most certainly look forward to the next meeting.

In my opinion the preparatory committee had put together a very balanced program. Spiritual things (gatherings, home teams with prayer, discussions and Bible studies, devotions and reports) were well balanced with other common activities (concerts, dancing, visit to the Aquarium, tour of the harbor).

The varied and eventful singing contributed to a good atmosphere. I was especially impressed by how Louise Rose could reach the youth with her sung and play-acted sermons, how the spark carried and became a burning fire. A special thanks should be given to her as the gathering was surely determined by her art and songs. It was gratifying to see how Louise Rose brought us again and again with her singing and play-acting to our roots and to the one who gives us wings, Jesus Christ.

Another remarkable point was the fact that all the bishops took part in this gathering. I do not even know for whom this participation was more important, for the youth or the bishops themselves. The manner of their appearance was also very gratifying, they seemed more like brothers than bishops. Through such a participation the youth can get to know and value its bishops and the bishops can experience the life of their congregational youth.



Together in Home Teams

Being together in the small groups (home teams) was a very important step towards personal togetherness and understanding. In these groups there were possibilities of speaking to each other. In listening to God's word we looked for concrete possibilities of succession and this was then practised in prayers.

Roots and wings did not grow on us, but we did experience that our faith, as nothing else in this world, gives roots to our lives and that it is our faith in the Resurrection which gives us wings.

In Germany we need the same roots in order to grow good fruits in our lives and the same wings to carry us and under which we can find shelter.

(Rev. Matthias Franke and Ms. Katrin Stolzer, both from Eastern Germany, represented the LWF at the above meeting)



Final Gathering

Gathering theme song
by Signe Knutson:

Brought together when we were small,
Held together as we grow...
Together under the cross,
Together just to show
That roots and wings and the love of God
Are all we need to live.
Together we can almost fly.
In Christ we have so much to give.

(From magazine Canadian Lutheran)

NEWS IN BRIEF

ASIA (eps)

End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism, an ecumenical effort based in Bangkok, has announced plans to officially launch its campaign at an international conference in Bangkok next year. According to ECPAT information, the problem is particularly acute in the Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan. Acting as an executive committee for the campaign are the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism, Christian Conference of Asia, Federation of (Roman Catholic) Asian Bishop's Conferences, and two ecumenical bodies which focus on tourism - TEN (in Europe) and NANET (in the United States).

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DENMARK (eps)

DANISH CENTER SENDS MISSIONARIES TO YOUNG WESTERNERS IN INDIA, NEPAL AND THAILAND -- During the past seven years, reports the Dialogue Center in the Danish city of Århus, it has sent out more than 80 young volunteers to work among young people from western countries in Nepal, India, and Thailand. The westerners have gone there to encounter eastern religions, but some of them have found themselves in serious difficulties. The latest group of volunteers from the center, whose board is chaired by Danish Lutheran theologian Johannes Aagaard, is to leave soon.

In another recent action, the center protested Danish government grants for yoga classes on grounds that yoga is really a form of Hinduism.

* * * * *

ETHIOPIA (lwi)

The Ethiopian government has recruited the largest standing army in sub-Saharan Africa. Estimates for the size of the regular army range from 300,000 men upwards, in addition to more than 150,000 in the "People's Militia." African Watch, the Washington-based human rights monitor says repeated military successes by the Eritrea People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) have led to rounds of conscription in which hundreds of thousands of men and boys have been forcibly taken for military service. In the last eight months alone, African Watch estimates that more than 100,000 conscripts have been enlisted.

The organization has expressed concern that the methods of conscription used by the Ethiopian government involve widespread and systematic violations of human rights. Africa Watch is further saddened by the fact that the government takes boys under the age of 18, and even under 15, in contravention of Ethiopian law.

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GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (lwi)

There are an estimated 30,000 potential right-wing extremists in the GDR, according to leading members of East Berlin's Ministry of the Interior at a May 5 interdisciplinary seminar on neofascism in the GDR.

The seminar, at a church center near East Berlin, was arranged by the youth commission of the Federation of Protestant Churches in the GDR and brought together theologians, social workers, criminologists, psychologists, philosophers and sociologists. Participants agreed that right-wing extremism in East Germany is not due to ideological reasons but rather a result of the social isolation that many young people feel.

A survey of 3,000 young people in the GDR showed that 64 percent did not approve the actions of right-wing "skinheads" -- young persons who have their hair cropped very close to the head and are characterized by their aggressive behavior. But the survey also indicated, according to a representative from the Leipzig Institute for Youth Research, that even those opposed to the violent gangs do in fact approve of violence as a form of punishment. The survey showed that both neofascists and anti-fascists showed a high acceptance of the use of violence.

East Berlin pastor and youth secretary of the Federation of Protestant Churches, Rudi Pahnke, gave the example of actions by independent anti-fascist groups against neofascist skinheads in East Berlin. Even the words of young people who belonged to the anti-fascist scene expressed the wish to eliminate the "enemy", Pahnke said. In many ways the attitudes of the opposing groups showed "a notably similar incapacity for tolerance and plurality," he said.

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GHANA (lwi)Unemployment among African youth causes concern

Accra, Ghana, June 21 -- An international workshop held here recently has identified the young as the most vulnerable on the labor market in sub-Saharan Africa. 19 percent of the population in the area is made up of 90 million people aged between 15 and 24 years. According to International Labor Organization estimates, some 36 million of them are seeking work.

The youth population in sub-Saharan Africa is growing at the rate of 3.3 percent annually, twice the growth rate of Asia and Latin America. Workshop speakers said that unemployment is creating a generation of frustrated citizens who indulge in drugs, excessive sex, and robbery as they seek escape from their distress. In Ghana, youth loot graves in search of ornaments; in Nigeria, they are heavily engaged in armed robbery; in Ivory Coast, a ministry has been set up to address the youth drugs problem; and in many African capitals, young women have no choice but to turn to prostitution, speakers said.

A hostile world commodity market, high population growth, geographical mobility, rapid expansion of education, and harassment of the informal sector of African economies are considered to be some of the causes of Africa's ever-increasing unemployed youth.

HUNGARY (lwi)

Budapest, Aug. 16 -- Religious instruction will be given on a voluntary basis in all schools in Hungary in the future, according to a report in the Hungarian daily newspaper "Nepszabadsag." An agreement to this effect has been reached between Hungarian Minister for Education, Werdalan Andrasfalvy, and negotiator for all the Hungarian churches, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary Bishop Bela Harmati. As a result, one to two hours of religious instruction per week can be included in the timetable for every school year. This will be carried out in consultation with teaching staff, who should include clergy and/or teachers of religion.

Religion teaching can be done by anyone with a theological degree or training in catechism, as well as a teaching permit from the respective church, according to "Nepszabadsag." The teaching staff would have the responsibility of making sure that no-one is put at a disadvantage because of taking part in religious instruction. The students would not receive a grade for religion in their reports at the end of the school year, nor would their denomination be noted. The schools would be responsible for providing an adequate teaching room and for paying the teachers.

Control of the actual content of the religious instruction classes would be left to the respective churches. For the long term, a solution is being planned for those wishing to stay away from the optional religion classes. They would be "taught in detail" about the important issues of human existence, about moral values and about living together as human beings.

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NORTHERN IRELAND

The EYCE (Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe) organized a Global Cultural Action Workshop in Northern Ireland in November 1990. This event brought young people together from all regions of the world, cultures and backgrounds and provided an opportunity to explore various political, economic and church situations in Northern Ireland. There was an introduction program, before going to various locations to learn in depth about the Northern Irish peace and justice issues. Then the group came together to share the various experiences, perceptions and insights. These experiences set the agenda for the workshop element.

This workshop was part of the extensive program of camps and summer activities organized by the EYCE.

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THE PHILIPPINES**Three promising Kasibu youth buried to death**

Three very active and promising young people from Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Poblacion, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya, studying at the Kalahan Academy in Imugan, St. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya, were suddenly buried to death by an

avalanche caused by the aftermath of an earthquake at about five o'clock in the morning of August 27, 1990 while still asleep in their dormitory. They are Marceline Catalino, Patrick B. de Leen and Nester Tacio and they were among the twelve victims of that Monday morning tragedy.

Marcelino Catalino, a 3rd year high school student, was the president of the young people in the congregation and the municipal-wide Kasibu, Lagpan, Edralin, Macate (KLEM) youth organization and also president of the entire student body of the Kalahan Academy. His ambition was to enter the Lutheran Seminary after finishing high school to become a minister/pastor.

Patrick B. de Leen, a 4th year student, was one of the consistent officers of the Young People's Organization and also an active officer of the student body of the Kalahan Academy.

Nestor Tacio, a 4th year student, was the incumbent president of the KLEM Young People's Organization and very engaged in church activities. He was also an officer of the student body of the Kalahan Academy. Like Marcelino, his cherished dream was to go to the seminary to prepare himself as a minister/pastor.

They were buried at the Gethsemane Church Compound in the afternoon of Friday, August 31, 1990. The bereaved families, the congregation and the young people are now feeling the void left by the departure of these active and promising youth. May they rest in peace!

(According to letter from Grace U. Benito, Young People's Organization)

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SWEDEN (Swedish Church Newspaper No. 22)

First meeting of Taizé in a Nordic country

During Easter 1990, more than 2000 young people from all over Europe gathered in Linköping, Sweden, for prayer, silence and singing. It was the first time that the brothers from the Taizé Community in France met in a Nordic country. A similar meeting was held around New Year 1989/90 in Wroclaw, Poland.

Brother Roger led the opening worship in the Cathedral of Linköping. The message of the Taizé movement often takes up the question of how we can find peace in our hearts through God's forgiveness. It means to discover that Jesus Christ is in us even if we did not know it before. The special importance of the Taizé Community is that it establishes contacts between young people from completely different countries and backgrounds. In Linköping special attention was given to the group of 300 from the Baltic states. Among them were Catholics, Protestants as well as Orthodox youth.

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USA (lwi)

U.S. Student Gathering to address intolerance

An Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) pastor says he hopes an upcoming mass gathering of students will help stem the tide of

intolerance on college campuses. An estimated 4,000 college students who participate in the campus ministries of a dozen major Protestant denominations are expected to attend the event December 28 - January 1 in Louisville, Kentucky. It will be the first mass gathering of student Christian organizations in the U.S. in more than a decade.

"Intolerance on campus, generally speaking, among persons of different races, life-styles, even religions, is an increasing concern our campus ministries try to address on an ongoing basis," said the Rev. Philip Knutson of Chicago, ELCA associate director for campus ministry and administrator for the ecumenical conference.

"This perhaps can be one step toward understanding, at least among Christians, that we have a commonality in Jesus Christ," he said. "Though we do have differences among ourselves about things like Communion and communion practices, we still are celebrating the one Spirit in the midst of our diversity." The theme for the National Gathering of Student Christian Conferences is "Celebrate! Many Gifts, One Spirit." The event will also include workshops, social and cultural events and separate meetings of the different denominational groups.

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U.S.S.R. (lwi)

Moscow, Aug. 2 -- Baptisms in the Soviet Union went up by around 250 percent between 1985, the beginning of perestroika, and 1989. As the weekly magazine "Argumenty i fakty" reported recently, exactly 637,081 baptisms were registered in 1985 and 1,639,285 in 1989. Five years ago, 16.4 percent of newborn babies were baptized, and in 1989 almost half of them, that is, 46.4 percent.

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ZAIRE (aps)

As the debate for and against multipartism widens and intensifies, an African Youth and Students Meeting recently (August 12-21) in Kinshasa, Zaire, challenged African leaders to adopt a tolerant and responsible attitude, and to accept the emergence of political systems that are responsive to peoples' needs and aspirations.

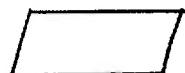
The 10-day meeting drew parallels between human rights abuse and development in Africa and concluded that millions of Africans, especially youth and women, are denied their basic rights as a result of ignorance. In this regard, the assembly invited African youth to get acquainted with fundamental documents concerning these rights, to sensitize their societies on the content of these documents, as well as to identify and denounce any violation of these rights within their countries. The assembly further requested the authorities both in the church and governments to respect human rights as enshrined in the United Nations and the OAU charter.

YOUTH LETTER ADDRESS UPDATE :

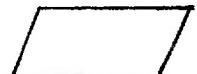
NAME:

Old address:

(If possible attach old address label)

1. I have a **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**. My new address is:.....
.....

.....(Please write legibly, otherwise we cannot send the Youth Letter to you!)

2. Please **DISCONTINUE** sending the Youth Letter to me3. Please **ADD** the following people to your mailing list:
(use separate sheet if necessary)

Name:

Address:

.....
.....

Name:

Address:

.....
.....**PLEASE RETURN TO:**LWF Youth Desk,
P.O. Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland



WITH BEST WISHES FOR A BLESSED
ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SEASON AS
WELL AS A HAPPY NEW YEAR